

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 31-49 are pending. Claim 1 is amended and Claims 31-49 are newly submitted. No new matter is introduced.¹

The outstanding Office Action rejected Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as indefinite. In addition, Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Togashi (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0036377) in view of Yasufuku (Sachio Yasufuku, *Application of Engineering Plastic Materials to Office Automation and Audio-Visual Appliances in Japan*, 8 IEEE Electrical Insulation Magazine 6 (1992)).

In rejecting Claim 1 as indefinite, the Office Action asserts that the phrase “said second material being one of a ABS resin...” is improper and suggests using the phrase “consisting of.” As suggested in the Office Action, amended Claim 1 recites “said second material *consisting of* one of...” In view of this amendment, all of the claims are believed to be definite and clear. It is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph be withdrawn.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 1 as obvious over Togashi in view of Yasufuku be withdrawn.

¹ Support for the amended and newly submitted claims can be found in the claims, specification, and figures of the disclosure as originally filed. For example, at paragraphs [0035]-[0038] of the specification as originally filed with reference to Figures 7 and 8. See MPEP 2163.06 stating that “information contained in any one of the specification, claims or drawings of the application as filed may be added to any other part of the application without introducing new matter.”

Claim 1 recites an image forming apparatus that includes an image forming section and a sheet feed apparatus aligned to feed a sheet to the image forming section. The sheet feed apparatus includes a sheet feed roller configured to be in pressing contact with an uppermost sheet of a plurality of sheets and a tilt member opposing the sheet feed roller.

Amended Claim 1 clarifies the structure of the claimed tilt member, reciting that the tilt member includes a tilt member contact body and a tilt member support body. Amended Claim 1 further recites that tilt member contact body includes:

- a contact face in direct contact with the sheet feed roller,
- a tilt face configured to be in contact with an edge of the uppermost sheet,
- a back face,
- a bottom face, and
- a front face, the contact face extending from the back face to the tilt face, the tilt face extending from the contact face to the front face, the back face extending from the contact face to the bottom face, a thickness of the tilt member contact body that extends from the back face to the front face *is less than* a height of the tilt member contact body that extends from the contact face to the bottom face... (Emphasis added.)

Amended Claim 1 further recites that the tilt member contact body is made of a first material, and the tilt member support body is made of a second material different from the first material. None of the cited references, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest the claimed tilt member.

Turning to the applied references, Figures 11-13 of Togashi illustrate a sheet feeder. A tilt face 6a and a contact face 6b of a tilt member 6 are covered with an elastic metal plate 9.² The outstanding Office Action states that:

Togashi discloses that the tilt face (9a) and the contact face (9b) are made of a first material (metal in numbered paragraph [OI 081] and the tilt member main body (6) is made of a second

² See Togashi, at paragraphs [0108]-[0113].

material (synthetic resin in numbered paragraph [0102]) different from the first material. More specifically, Fig. 13 and numbered paragraphs [0141]-[0151] of Togashi provide a general teaching of the advantages of using a different material (e.g., metal) in the region where the contact face and the tilt face are located than the tilt member main body (6) (i.e., the synthetic resin tilt member main body 6), because this region is **susceptible to abrasion**.³

However, amended Claim 1 clarifies that the claimed tilt member includes a tilt member contact body and a tilt member support body. Moreover amended Claim 1 recites that a thickness of the tilt member contact body that extends from a back face to a front face *is less than* a height of the tilt member contact body that extends from a contact face to a bottom face. By contrast, as can be seen in Figures 11-13 of Togashi, the elastic metal plate 9 is a *plate* formed by bending such that a tilt face 9a is engaged with the tilt face 6a of the tilt member 6, and a contact face 9b is engaged with the contact face 6b. The elastic metal plate 9 does not have a thickness that extends from the claimed back face to that claimed front face that is *less than* its height. Indeed, as can be seen in Figure 12 of Togashi, the elastic metal plate 9 does not have equivalent dimensions to those claimed because the structure of a metal *plate* bent around a tilt member 6 is significantly different than the claimed tilt member contact *body* that includes a contact face extending from a back face to a tilt face, the tilt face extending from the contact face to a front face, and the back face extending from the contact face to a bottom face. Thus, Togashi fails to disclose or suggest the claimed tilt member that includes a tilt member contact body and a tilt member support body, as recited in amended Claim 1.

With respect to Yasufuku, this reference was not relied upon as teaching the claimed structure of a tilt member. Indeed, Yasufuku does not include any description of the

³ See the outstanding Office Action at page 4, lines 15-22.

structural aspects of a tilt member that includes a tilt member contact body and a tilt member support body. Thus, Yasufuku fails to cure the deficiencies in Togashi.

Accordingly, even the combined teachings of Togashi and Yasufuku fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of Claim 1. It is submitted that Claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

New Claims 31-43 depend from Claim 1 and recite additional features that are not disclosed or rendered obvious by the cited references. Moreover, as discussed in detail above, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 is allowable, and therefore Claims 31-43 are also allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

New Claims 44-49 recite additional features that are not disclosed or rendered obvious by the cited references. Independent Claim 44 recites a sheet feeding apparatus that includes a sheet feed roller configured to be in pressing contact with an uppermost sheet of a plurality of sheets and a tilt member opposing the sheet feed roller. Claim 44 further recites that the tilt member includes a tilt member contact body and a tilt member support body, and that the tilt member contact body includes:

- a contact face in direct contact with the sheet feed roller,
- a tilt face configured to be in contact with an edge of the uppermost sheet,
- a back face,
- a bottom face, and
- a front face, the contact face extending from the back face to the tilt face, the tilt face extending from the contact face to the front face, the back face extending from the contact face to the bottom face, a thickness of the tilt member contact body that extends from the back face to the front face *is less than* a height of the tilt member contact body that extends from the contact face to the bottom face...(Emphasis added.)

As discussed above with respect to independent Claim 1, Togashi fails to disclose or suggest a tilt member that includes a tilt member contact body and a tilt member support body. Accordingly, even the combined teachings of Togashi and Yasufuku fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of Claim 44. It is submitted that Claim 44 and Claims 45-49 depending therefrom are in condition for allowance.

For the reasons discussed above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance for Claims 1 and 31-49 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

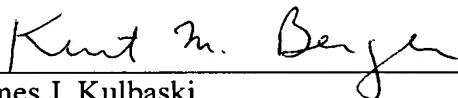
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Respectfully submitted,

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